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ABSTRACT

This module, one of a series of 127 performance-based teacher education learning packages focusing on specific professional competencies of vocational teachers, deals with preparing exceptional students for employability. Included in the module are learning experiences that address the following topics: promoting employment opportunities for students with exceptional needs (working with advisory committees in employability skills training, gathering employment data, and promoting additional jobs) and techniques for teaching employability skills (creating positive work attitudes, recognizing cultural differences, developing additional employability skills, introducing the reality of employment, and developing job skills). Each learning experience contains one or more learning activities and a feedback activity. (MN)

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MODULE

L-12

Prepare Exceptional Students For Employability

Module L-12 of Category L—
Serving Students with Special/Exceptional Needs
PROFESSIONAL TEACHER EDUCATION MODULE SERIES

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FOREWORD

This module is one of a series of 127 performance-based teacher education (PBTE) learning packages focusing upon specific professional competencies of vocational teachers. The competencies upon which these modules are based were identified and verified through research as being important to successful vocational teaching at both the secondary and postsecondary levels of instruction. The modules are suitable for the preparation of teachers and other occupational trainers in all occupational areas.

Each module provides learning experiences that integrate theory and application; each culminates with criterion-referenced assessment of the teacher's (instructor's, trainer's) performance of the specified competency. The materials are designed for use by teachers-in-training working individually or in groups under the direction and with the assistance of teacher educators or others acting as resource persons. Resource persons should be skilled in the teacher competencies being developed and should be thoroughly oriented to PBTE concepts and procedures before using these materials.

The design of the materials provides considerable flexibility for planning and conducting performance-based training programs for preservice and inservice teachers, as well as business-industry-labor trainers, to meet a wide variety of individual needs and interests. The materials are intended for use by universities and colleges, state departments of education, postsecondary institutions, local education agencies, and others responsible for the professional development of vocational teachers and other occupational trainers.

The PBTE curriculum packages in Category L—Serving Students with Special/Exceptional Needs—are designed to enable vocational teachers and other occupational trainers to create learning environments that are accessible, accommodating, and equitable in meeting the instructional needs of individuals in those groups previously denied equal vocational education opportunities. The modules are based upon 380 teacher competencies identified and verified as essential for vocational teachers to meet the special needs of all students in their classes. Included are special populations such as the handicapped, adults pursuing retraining, and students enrolled in programs that are nontraditional for their sex.

Many individuals and institutions have contributed to the research, development, testing, and revision of these significant training materials. Appreciation is extended to the following individuals who, as members of the project technical panel, advised project staff, identified human and material resources, and reviewed draft materials: James B. Boyer, Ken Dieckhoff, Mary M. Frasier, Gerald R. Fuller, Juan Guzman, Jerry Holloway, Barbara Kemp, Jeffrey G. Keily, Betty Ross-Thomson, Ann Turnham-Smith, and Richard Tyler.

Appreciation is also extended to the approximately 80 vocational teachers and supervisors from throughout the United States who served on the eight DACUM analysis panels that assisted National Center staff in the initial identification of the teacher competency statements. Appreciation is extended, too, to the 80 additional teachers and supervisors from throughout the United States who assisted in the verification of the 380 competencies.

Field testing of the materials was carried out with assistance of field-site coordinators, teacher educators, students, directors of staff development, and others at the following institutions: University of Alabama–Birmingham; Albuquerque Technical-Vocational Institute, New Mexico; University of Central Florida; University of Southern Maine; Maricopa County Community College District, Arizona; Murray State University, Kentucky; University of New Hampshire; SUNY College of Technology–Utica, New York; Temple University, Pennsylvania; Texas State Technical College; Upper Valley Joint Vocational School, Ohio; and Central Washington University.

Special recognition for major individual roles in the development of these materials is extended to the following National Center staff: Lucille Campbell-Thrane, Associate Director, Development Division, and James B. Hamilton, Program Director, for leadership and direction of the project; Lois G. Harrington, Karen M. Quinn, and Michael E. Wonacott, Program Associates, for training of module writers and module quality control; Cheryl M. Lowry, Research Specialist, for developing illustration specifications; Kevin Burke and Barbara Shea for art work; Nancy Lust, Research Specialist, and Wheeler Richards, Graduate Research Associate, for assisting in the coordination of module field testing and data summarization; and Catherine C. King-Fitch, Program Associate, for revision of the materials following field testing. Special recognition is also extended to George W. Smith Jr., Art Director at AAVIM, for supervision of the module production process.

Robert E. Taylor
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Vocational Education

THE NATIONAL CENTER
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The National Center for Research in Vocational Education's mission is to increase the ability of diverse agencies, institutions, and organizations to solve educational problems relating to individual career planning, preparation, and progression. The National Center fulfills its mission by:

- Generating knowledge through research.
- Developing educational programs and products.
- Evaluating individual program needs and outcomes.
- Providing information for national planning and policy.
- Installing educational programs and products.
- Operating information systems and services.
- Conducting leadership development and training programs.

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The American Association for Vocational Instructional Materials (AAVIM) is a nonprofit national institute.

The institute is a cooperative effort of universities, colleges and divisions of vocational and technical education in the United States and Canada to provide for excellence in instructional materials.

Direction is given by a representative from each of the states, provinces and territories. AAVIM also works closely with teacher organizations, government agencies and industry.

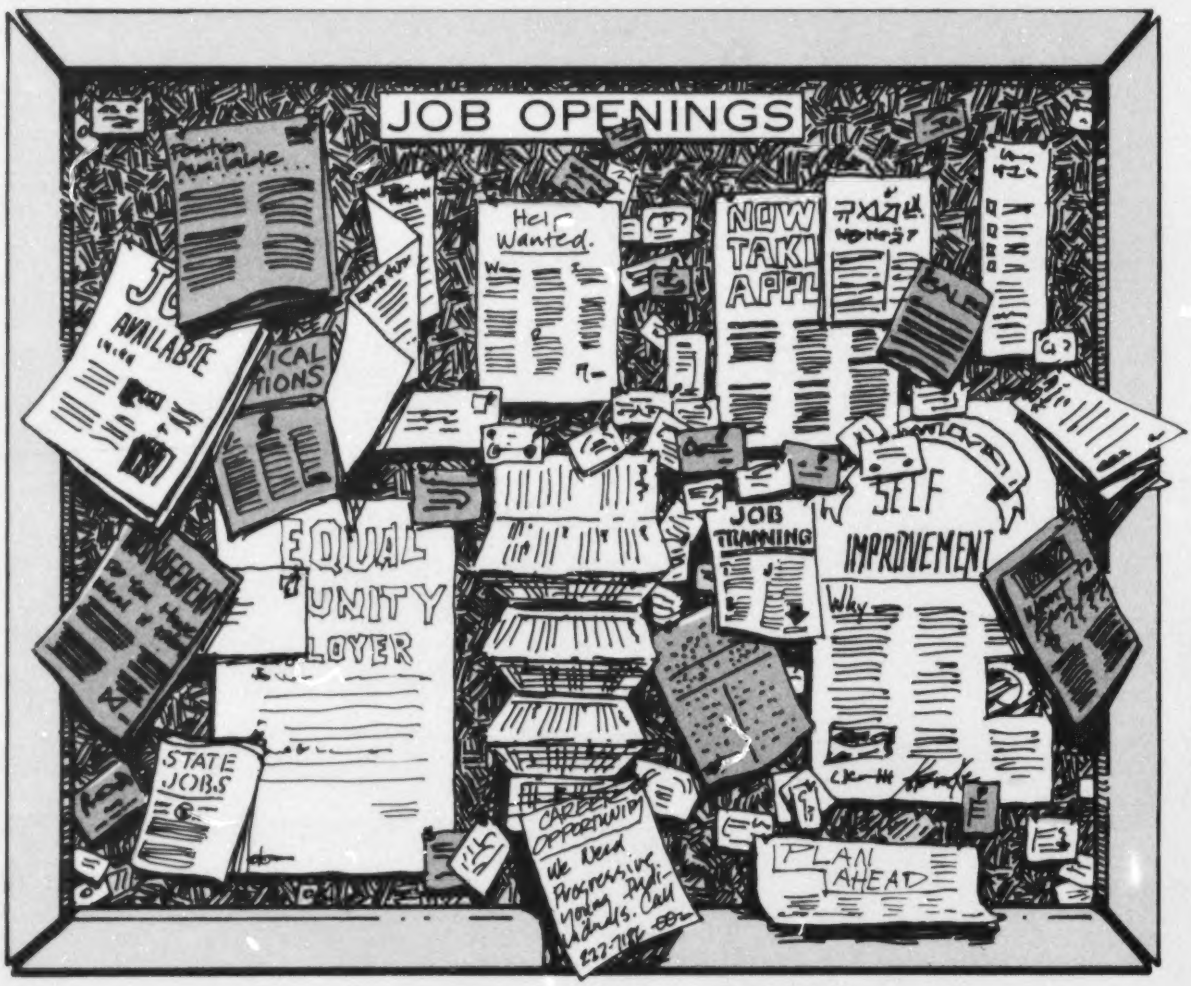
INTRODUCTION

Work is a necessary and important aspect of adult life. Most people, including those with exceptional needs, want to work to establish financial independence and a feeling of self-worth. Today, persons with exceptional needs are entering the world of work in growing numbers. As a vocational-technical teacher, you will share in the responsibility of preparing these persons for the realities of work and helping them obtain employment.

Students with exceptional needs may need information about the labor market and the types of jobs available to them. They may need to know what will be expected of them on the job—their rights and their responsibilities. In addition, many of these students may need training in the techniques of applying for a job—filling out an application form and interviewing.

Even in our modern society, some employers still hesitate to hire persons with exceptional needs. You may need to work with these employers to promote the placement of your students and to eliminate unnecessary restrictions. You may need to encourage employers to modify some jobs or to make other physical adjustments.

This module is designed to give you skill in working with potential employers and in helping students obtain employment. Also, it will help you in gathering job information and in explaining the complexities of the world of work to students who have exceptional needs.



ABOUT THIS MODULE

Objectives

Terminal Objective: In an actual teaching situation, prepare exceptional students for employability. Your performance will be assessed by your resource person, using the Teacher Performance Assessment Form, pp. 37–39 *(Learning Experience III)*.

Enabling Objectives:

1. After completing the required reading, critique the performance of a teacher in a given case study in promoting employment opportunities for students with exceptional needs *(Learning Experience I)*.
2. After completing the required reading, identify the employability needs of two of the three students described in given case situations and plan appropriate techniques to meet those needs *(Learning Experience II)*.

Prerequisites

The modules in Category L are **not** designed for the prospective teacher with no prior training and/or experience. They assume that you have achieved a minimal level of skill in the core teacher competencies of instructional planning, execution, and evaluation. They then build on or expand that skill level, specifically in terms of serving students with special/exceptional needs.

In addition, to complete this module, you should have defined or redefined your educational philosophy to include your responsibility for serving students with exceptional needs; and you should have competency in identifying and diagnosing the needs of these students. If you do not already meet these requirements, meet with your resource person to determine what method you will use to do so. One option is to complete the information and practice activities in the following modules:

- *Prepare Yourself to Serve Exceptional Students,* Module L-1
- *Identify and Diagnose Exceptional Students,* Module L-2

Resources

A list of the outside resources that supplement those contained within the module follows. Check with your resource person (1) to determine the availability and the location of these resources, (2) to locate additional references in your occupational specialty, and (3) to get assistance in setting up activities with peers or observations of skilled teachers, if necessary. Your resource person may also be contacted if you have any difficulty with directions or in assessing your progress at any time.

Learning Experience I

Optional

- *Federal, state, and local employment centers and agencies* that you can contact concerning job opportunities and placement services available to students with exceptional needs.

Learning Experience II

Optional

- *Materials on special programs designed to increase employability and information on available jobs* that you can use to start a resource file for students.

Learning Experience III

Required

- *An actual teaching situation* in which you can prepare students for employability.
- *A resource person* to assess your competency in preparing exceptional students for employability.

Terminology

Special/Exceptional Needs: Referred to in the modules simply as exceptional needs, this term refers to those needs that may prevent a student from succeeding in regular vocational education classes without special consideration and help. The following types of students are included in our definition of students with exceptional needs:

- Persons enrolled in programs nontraditional for their sex (e.g., the male in home economics)
- Adults requiring retraining (e.g., displaced homemakers, technologically displaced)
- Persons with limited English proficiency
- Members of racial/ethnic minority groups
- Urban/rural economically disadvantaged
- Gifted and talented
- Mentally retarded
- Sensory & physically impaired

General Information

For information about the general organization of each performance-based teacher education (PBTE) module, general procedures for its use, and terminology that is common to all the modules, see About Using the National Center's PBTE Modules on the inside back cover. For more in-depth information on how to use the modules in teacher/trainer education programs, you may wish to refer to three related documents:

The *Student Guide to Using Performance-Based Teacher Education Materials* is designed to help orient preservice and inservice teachers and occupational trainers to PBTE in general and to the PBTE materials.

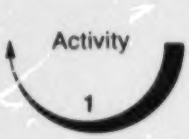
The *Resource Person Guide to Using Performance-Based Teacher Education Materials* can help prospective resource persons to guide and assist preservice and inservice teachers and occupational trainers in the development of professional teaching competencies through use of the PBTE modules. It also includes lists of all the module competencies, as well as a listing of the supplementary resources and the addresses where they can be obtained.

The *Guide to the Implementation of Performance-Based Teacher Education* is designed to help those who will administer the PBTE program. It contains answers to implementation questions, possible solutions to problems, and alternative courses of action.

Learning Experience I

OVERVIEW

After completing the required reading, critique the performance of a teacher described in a given case study in promoting employment opportunities for students with exceptional needs.

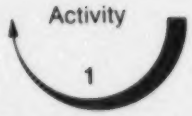


You will be reading the information sheet, Promoting Employment Opportunities, pp. 6–12.

You may wish to contact federal, state, and local employment centers and agencies in order to gain a better understanding of the job opportunities and placement services currently available to students with exceptional needs.

You will be reading the Case Study, p. 13, and critiquing the performance of the teacher described.

You will be evaluating your competency in critiquing the teacher's performance in promoting employment opportunities for students with exceptional needs by comparing your completed critique with the Model Critique, p. 15.



For information on selecting appropriate advisory committee members, gathering specific employment data, and promoting job opportunities for students with exceptional needs, read the following information sheet.

PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Students with exceptional needs may require special guidance and information in order to be able to find and obtain employment. As a vocational-technical teacher, you need to provide these students with the skills and training necessary to compete in the world of work. Your efforts should prepare them for work and for becoming productive members of society.

Although you may not be responsible for placing students in jobs, without your help some students with exceptional needs will never achieve the career goals that they are seeking. They need you to smooth the way and to encourage employers to evaluate them on the basis of their **abilities,** rather than their "handicaps." For you, it will be a challenging experience but a rewarding one.

Several steps, which you can take to create a favorable employment environment and to help employers fully utilize the skills of these potential members of the work force, are described in the following sections.

Involve Your Advisory Committee

As a vocational-technical instructor, one mechanism you have for maintaining a linkage with the world of work is the occupational (craft, trade) advisory committee. Although you could also be involved with local advisory committees at the departmental or vocational program level, it is the occupational advisory committee that is generally most closely associated with the vocational teacher and the problems and concerns at the classroom level.

One of these concerns—for all students—is employability: (1) ensuring that the program adequately prepares students to enter the world of work and (2) working with employers to facilitate student placement on the job. The occupational advisory committee—which is generally made up of persons from business, industry, and the community—is usually a key part of any strategy for meeting this employability concern.

Representatives of business and industry on these committees are often involved in the following types of functions:

- Contacting their colleagues to explain the vocational-technical program, the skills of the students, and the advantages of hiring them
- Providing instructors with information on ways to approach potential employers who may be reluctant to hire students
- Keeping instructors informed about changing technology, industry's training requirements, and employment opportunities
- Helping instructors develop realistic instructional plans to prepare students to enter the work force

When you have students with exceptional needs in your program, however, it is important to ensure that your advisory committee can adequately understand how these needs affect employability. It is important to ensure, too, that the members are prepared to help overcome any unfair barriers to employment that these students may encounter.

There are two ways to prepare the committee. First, you can make sure that you include on the committee persons who "represent" the special needs of the students in your program. Second, you can plan activities for the committee that will increase their knowledge of and sensitivity to the strengths, as well as the needs, of these students.

Select Appropriate Advisory Committee Members

A wide variety of "specialists" qualify for inclusion on the advisory committee, depending on the exceptional needs of the students in your classes. You can invite **persons who have similar exceptional needs.** For example, assume that one of your students is confined to a wheelchair. If possible, you would want to have on your advisory committee a person with a similar disability who is successfully employed in your occupational area.

Such a person may be able to (1) inform you of the particular problems that a wheelchair-bound worker may face on the job, (2) offer advice on how to solve those problems, (3) suggest how best to deal with any negative attitudes toward such a "disability" on the

part of the employer or other employees, and (4) identify employers who are receptive to hiring workers with exceptional needs.

Similarly, depending on the exceptional needs of your students, you might want to include on your committee a person who learned English as a second language, a young paraplegic, or someone who changed careers later in life.

It is best if these persons are employed in your occupational area, but in some cases it will not be possible to locate such people. However, it is still beneficial to have a representative on the committee who understands "how it feels" to have an exceptional need, even if it is not occupation-specific or occupation-related.

You also can identify **employers who hire persons with exceptional needs** and include them on the committee. Nowadays, some businesses are establishing programs specifically designed to train minorities, the mentally retarded, the physically handicapped, persons in occupations that are nontraditional for their sex, and older persons reentering the work force. Thus, they actively recruit such persons.

Furthermore, companies that receive federal contracts or grants are required to have nondiscriminatory hiring practices. And jobs in all levels of government are open to the qualified handicapped.

You can identify the employers in your community who hire persons with exceptional needs by contacting the chamber of commerce, business organizations, and unions. Often these groups have conducted surveys that pinpoint such employers.

These employers can advise your committee of skills and training that would make your students more employable. They may also be able to tell you about other employers in the area that hire persons with exceptional needs. They may be able to provide placement opportunities in their own companies for your students. In addition, if they have credibility in the business community, they can sensitize others to the capabilities of workers with exceptional needs. Because they hire these workers themselves, they may serve as role models for other local employers.

Another person who can be an asset to the advisory committee is the **person who has expertise in working with or teaching students with exceptional needs.** For example, the special education teacher could be asked to serve on the committee if you have any mentally retarded or slower learners in your class. Similarly, you might want to include on the committee a teacher who has expertise in dealing with gifted/talented students.

Another possible candidate might be a teacher who is a member of an ethnic minority group. The idea is to include people who have expertise in the particular exceptional needs of your students and can help you prepare them to be more employable.

Provide Information about the Exceptional Needs of Students

There is another real advantage to including these "specialists" on the advisory committee. Other members of the committee may not be familiar with the particular exceptional needs of your students. You and the "exceptional specialists" can acquaint the committee with the aspirations and talents of these students, as well as with their disabilities, limitations, and problems. The specialists can help the others to become more aware of and responsive to the exceptional needs of students.

To further foster understanding, you may want the committee to view **films** on related topics. Such films may show women working in traditionally male jobs, life in a poor urban setting, or architectural barriers for the physically handicapped. You can also invite **guest speakers** who have exceptional needs or who are specialists in the various areas. Possible topics they might present include the following:

- Legal rights of the handicapped
- Hiring a blind person
- The mentally retarded at work
- Employing Vietnam veterans
- Jobs for the older worker

This information can be important to the advisory committee members, who will be helping you explain your program to local employers and the community, and who are themselves local employers and/or community members. They need to know as much as possible about what you are doing to prepare students with exceptional needs for employment. Make them knowledgeable, and they can help pave the way for your students' entry into the work force.[1]

1. To gain skill in working with an advisory committee, you may wish to refer to Module A-5, *Maintain an Occupational Advisory Committee.*

Gather Employment Data

Finding a job that fits a student's talents and goals is always a challenge, but it may be more so for students with exceptional needs. Employers may have misconceptions about the abilities of such workers and, in some cases, may be reluctant to hire them.

As a vocational-technical teacher, you should be realistic about what your students are able to do. It is important for you to be sure that a particular student can succeed in the occupation before you raise his/her hopes. Then you need to design your training program to meet individual needs and to help each student find a job. To do this, you need to gather specific employment information that will be useful to students in locating work.

There are a variety of **sources of job information** with which you should be familiar. Many schools conduct community surveys that provide information about current occupational opportunities and the future employment needs of local businesses and industries. Such data can tell you which businesses hire workers with the type of training and qualifications your students have. In addition, schools often maintain lists of available jobs, and some even provide placement services.

The state bureau of employment services offers a current listing of thousands of available jobs and will refer qualified workers at no charge. City, state, and federal offices can provide information on civil service jobs, which by law are open to persons with exceptional needs.

Other possible sources are local chambers of commerce, community organizations, and special interest groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Organization for Women (NOW). Labor unions, fraternal lodges, and veterans associations also may have listings of jobs that are available to persons with exceptional needs. Finally, the classified section of the daily newspaper contains a variety of local job openings.

You should also examine any student follow-up data compiled by the school concerning what types of jobs former students—specifically those with exceptional needs—have obtained and in what industries. This information can help you identify potential employers in the community and the kinds of jobs that are available.

For example, assume that the follow-up data indicate that a local warehouse has hired several women graduates as forklift operators and equipment repairers. However, the data also show that a large machine shop repeatedly has refused to hire mentally retarded students for any position except that of janitor. This information can give you a feel for which employers are presently willing to give students with exceptional needs a chance and which are not.

There are several **problem areas you may encounter** while investigating particular jobs for your students. First, you may find that certain jobs offer no possibilities of advancement for students with exceptional needs. Some jobs require physical dexterity or advanced education that, generally, are beyond the capabilities of the physically handicapped or the mentally retarded.

Second, you should keep in mind that discrimination exists, even though it is illegal. In certain occupations, members of minority groups have had more difficulty in obtaining employment or in advancing once they have acquired the job.

Also, some positions, such as highway construction worker and railroad conducter, are still often considered off limits to women. Furthermore, men may avoid jobs traditionally held by women because of the low pay. For example, in the past men have seldom sought work as typists or as nursery school aides.

Finally, the number of jobs available to students with exceptional needs may be limited, and many of them might be entry-level positions. As a result, the beginning pay scale may be lower. For example, persons who are mentally retarded frequently are tracked into jobs involving custodial work. These are often menial, low-paying jobs, and many retarded students are capable of doing more.

Promote Additional Jobs

Another way to help students with exceptional needs is to work with employers to provide additional job opportunities. There are many jobs in business and industry that can be filled by persons with exceptional needs. However, these persons may be denied suitable employment because of (1) discrimination, (2) poorly informed employers, and (3) outdated hiring practices and job descriptions. You can help your students by being aware of the problems yourself and by trying to make industry more aware.

Although federal legislation prohibits **discrimination,** some employers still consider an applicant's age, sex, ethnic background, and physical limitations in making hiring decisions. As a result, qualified workers with exceptional needs may not be given the chance to demonstrate their talents.

On occasion, discrimination affects employees who have been on the job for a number of years. For example, some businesses pay women a lower salary than men for the same work simply because they are women. Also, some companies stop considering employees for promotion once they've reached a certain age, or they require a certain number years on the job before advancement is possible. These policies hurt the qualified older worker, who may be changing careers or have been displaced because of technological advances.

Much discrimination is unintentional and occurs simply because **employers are poorly informed.** They may be unaware of the capabilities of students with exceptional needs and, therefore, hesitant to give them a try. Further, they may have faulty information or misconceptions about workers with exceptional needs.

For example, some employers feel that the physically handicapped wouldn't make good workers because of their disabilities. However, recent studies show that handicapped employees are generally more dependable and do their jobs as well as other employees. Their accident rate is lower, and they tend to be more safety conscious.

Recent information also indicates that older women reentering the labor force as secretaries often make better employees. Many workers with exceptional needs are more hard working and industrious because they know how difficult it is for them to find jobs. Their exceptionalities should not bar them from pursuing careers for which they are qualified.

In some cases, companies have **outdated hiring practices and job descriptions.** These practices may have been in effect for many years and, as a result, the companies may be unaware that they are arbitrarily eliminating part of the population from the work force. Such hiring practices might require more skills and training for entry-level jobs than are really necessary. Or they may call for employing only men for certain jobs and only women for others.

By restructuring some jobs, companies can open the door to hiring more persons with exceptional needs. However, they may need help in reviewing their requirements and in making them more realistic for workers with exceptional needs.

For example, one furniture manufacturer quite naturally required skill in building and finishing cabinets for the position of cabinetmaker. However, the job description also specified that the worker must lift the completed cabinet onto a truck for shipping.

This requirement resulted from the fact that men had always held this job and, over the years, had gradually assumed the responsibility for moving and loading the furniture. Thus, the company had added lifting to the job description and, therefore, would not hire qualified women cabinetmakers, who could not, it was supposed, lift the heavy cabinets.

An area vocational teacher became aware of this situation while investigating job opportunities for his students. First, he met with the manufacturer and discussed the kinds of training the workers needed and asked for suggestions on ways to better prepare his students for that industry.

The employer was friendly and indicated a willingness to cooperate, so the teacher mentioned the lifting requirement for cabinetmakers. In the course of the conversation, he noted that it must be expensive to pay skilled craftspersons high wages to move furniture

when lower-level employees could do the work for less money. He also pointed out that production might increase if the cabinetmakers were only required to build furniture.

The manufacturer was impressed with these money-saving suggestions and decided to drop the lifting requirement from the job description of cabinetmaker. As a result, qualified women were now eligible for that position.

In another case, an insurance office had two openings for the position of file clerk. Both jobs required the typing and filing of customer correspondence and other paperwork. The office skills teacher in the local high school had two capable students whom she wanted to place in those jobs. However, one of the students was mentally retarded; she had difficulty with filing but was a steady and accurate typist.

Therefore, the teacher met with the employer and suggested restructuring the two jobs so that one worker would do only filing and the other would do only typing. She pointed out that the same amount of work would be completed—that only the job descriptions would change. The employer agreed to give the new system a try and consequently hired both students.

What You Can Do

Dealing with employers to try to promote additional jobs for students with exceptional needs can be time-consuming. You need, therefore, to decide how much time you can realistically give to this task. Although working with employers could easily take up all your free hours, you need to remember that you have other responsibilities. You still need to prepare lessons, attend faculty meetings, hold conferences, and of course allow time for your personal life.

You need to decide how much you are willing to do. It would be possible to immerse yourself completely in promoting additional job opportunities. You need to examine your feelings honestly and decide what is realistic for you to do. Any effort on your part will benefit your students.

You also need to take into consideration the attitude of the board of education or trustees toward having individual teachers contact members of the business community. The board may have guidelines that govern teachers' activities. This would have a bearing on what you could do to promote jobs for students with exceptional needs.

In addition, your efforts will be affected by the attitudes of the various local employers. You may find some that are very receptive and willing to work with you to provide jobs. Others may respond negatively and refuse even to talk to you. Your good intentions, therefore, can be either helped or hampered by forces beyond your control.

How You Can Do It

There are many techniques that you can use to inform employers of the abilities and skills of students with exceptional needs and to help them modify jobs to be more accessible to these students.

News media. The news media—newspapers, radio, and television—can be valuable tools in trying to promote jobs for students with exceptional needs. You can use the existing system to your advantage by sending information about student activities to radio and television stations and newspapers in your area.

For example, suppose that one of your students with exceptional needs received an award from the vocational student organization. A **news release** explaining the award and including information about the benefits of your vocational program could be prepared and submitted to the appropriate sources.

In many cases, the media will use such a story, which amounts to free publicity for your program and for the capabilities of students with exceptional needs. Since newspapers, radio, and television reach such a wide audience, employers throughout the area can hear about the abilities and achievements of these students.

Printed materials. You can provide employers with **brochures** and **information packets** that describe the skills that students with exceptional needs acquire in your vocational program. Some schools may already have a program brochure that describes the general curriculum. If this is the case in your school, you might suggest adding a section that explains how the program assists students with exceptional needs.

Or you could offer to help develop a special brochure that deals exclusively with the training provided to these students. For example, you might want to prepare a brochure showing how your program serves men or women who are training for occupations nontraditional for their sex, such as men in nursing or women in auto mechanics.

The brochures and handouts should be brief and to the point. You could stress the fact that the students are well trained in their chosen fields and have performed in simulated work settings. You could explain the high standards your program maintains and mention former students with exceptional needs who are successfully employed in industry. Such printed information can serve as a constant reminder to employers to consider persons with exceptional needs when hiring workers.

Open houses. Inviting employers to attend a school open house or career day is another technique to use in promoting additional jobs. Employers who have been reluctant to hire students with exceptional needs may have a change of heart once they've seen them in action. You can show employers what your students

actually can do by inviting them to visit the school, observe the vocational program, and see students performing various activities. The old adage "seeing is believing" generally holds true.

Presentations. There are several kinds of presentations you can use to familiarize employers with the talents and skills of students with exceptional needs. One is the **slide/tape** or **film** presentation. You should be able to locate many excellent audiovisuals at the local library, at the state employment bureau, or through government agencies that serve the various exceptional populations.

These audiovisuals may portray a paraplegic reentering society, handicapped employees succeeding in various types of jobs, or mid-life career changers functioning in new positions. An example is the WGBH (Boston) film, "Working on Working, Parts I & II," which depicts the achievements of students with exceptional needs who have been mainstreamed into vocational classes.

Another type of presentation is the **lecture.** Lectures are most often used at meetings of community and service organizations. You can invite the participation of former students with exceptional needs who have graduated from the program. They can describe their careers and their successes on the job. Also, you can ask some of your current students with exceptional needs to discuss the training they are receiving in the program.

In addition, you might want to invite several specialists to speak about the potential of students with exceptional needs. For example, they could explain that the mentally retarded can, in fact, be trained to do a variety of jobs that are vital to modern industry, and they could give specific examples.

Cooperative education programs. Another excellent way to promote job opportunities is to encourage employers to hire students with exceptional needs on a co-op basis while they're still in school. This gives employers a chance to experience firsthand the value of employing these students.

First, you need to identify potential employers and explain to them the advantages of participating in a co-op program. For example, they will be able to be involved in training future workers in their own plants to perform specific industry jobs. They will have part-time employees who are enthusiastic and eager to learn. Also, they will have helped create a larger group of qualified applicants from which to choose when hiring for full-time positions.

In encouraging employers to participate, it is important to point out the specific skills your students possess. However, to be fair, you must also mention any of their limitations. For example, assume that a co-op instructor is trying to place a mentally retarded student as a flower arranger in a florist shop. The student can make beautiful corsages and bouquets but has difficulty in filling out forms to reorder flowers. The instructor should make that clear to the employer so that he/she doesn't expect more than the student can do.

In addition, you need to make sure that employers know that students in the co-op program will be receiving work-related assistance while in class. They need to be assured that you will be available to help with any problems. Employers may be unaccustomed to dealing with persons with exceptional needs. Thus, they may need your support.

You also need to explain to employers that, through the co-op program, they will have the opportunity to provide you with input concerning the kinds of in-class training that will make your students more employable. For example, an employer might suggest to the construction carpentry instructor that he/she needs to place more emphasis on the reading of blueprints. These combined efforts—employer and instructor—should produce well-qualified students who are prepared to enter the labor market.

Personal contacts. Personally contacting local employers is another tactic you can use to promote jobs for students with exceptional needs. You can visit employers or talk to them by telephone and explain the training and skills your program provides. You can provide them with specific information concerning the abilities of students with exceptional needs, such as reading comprehension and manual dexterity.

Furthermore, you can ask them for suggestions about the kinds of skills that would make your students more attractive to industry. Employers will often appreciate the fact that you have taken the time to involve and inform them. As a result, they may be more willing to hire these students.

Also, you can use personal contacts as a means to help industry modify equipment and machinery to be more accessible to workers with exceptional needs. There are many jobs that these workers could perform if the equipment were slightly altered. However, the way in which you deal with employers will have a great effect on your success rate. You can't demand that they modify equipment, but you can point out the benefits.

First, you should develop a good rapport with the employer and seek his/her advice on the skills your students need in order to work in the industry. Then you can ask the employer what he/she thinks about modifying certain machinery and explain why you are in favor of it. Gradually, the employer may decide to try altering certain equipment.

Once employers are willing to modify equipment, you can offer to help them determine which equipment could be modified for use by workers with exceptional needs. You can help the employer determine which step is preventing the worker from doing the job and

offer suggestions for modifying equipment.

For example, you could point out that equipping some machines with hand controls will allow a person confined to a wheelchair to operate them. You could suggest adding an amplification device to a telephone so that a worker with a hearing impairment can use it. Or you could recommend color coding an assembly job so that a mentally retarded student, who is unable to read well, can do the work.

It is important for the employer to understand that you want to modify the way the worker does the job, not change the employer's **standards** for that job. You need to stress that the finished product will be of the same high quality. The only difference will be the manner in which the work is performed. Most employers will agree to such on-the-top changes if they are not expensive and the job can be done satisfactorily.

Also, you should be realistic about expecting employers to modify machinery. Certain positions cannot be adapted for the handicapped. For example, some sewing machines require combined hand and foot coordination to operate them. In that case, it may be impossible to modify the machine for use by a person with only one arm.

Plan of Action

All of these techniques can be useful in helping promote additional employment opportunities for students with exceptional needs. You can elect to use any combination of methods, depending on the amount of time you have available for such activities. Also keep in mind that there are others on the school staff who can perform some of these functions for you.

For example, the librarian or audiovisual specialist may be able to help locate printed materials or films for presentation to employers. The school secretary may be available to help mail brochures and information packets. You should call on these people to help you promote your program and your students. It is important to remember that any effort, no matter how small, will help students with exceptional needs enter the job market.

To gain a better understanding of the job opportunities currently available to persons with exceptional needs and the placement services that can be used, you may wish to contact the following sources:

- Local employment agencies
- State bureau of employment services
- Federal job information center
- Governor's committee on employment of the handicapped
- State association for retarded citizens
- State vocational rehabilitation offices

During your contacts, you could structure your discussion around several pertinent questions:

- What local businesses hire persons with exceptional needs?
- What types of jobs do persons with exceptional needs frequently obtain?
- What is being done to help persons with exceptional needs to find jobs?

Read the following case study describing how Dan Miller, a vocational teacher, helped promote employment opportunities for students with exceptional needs. As you read, try to determine what Mr. Miller is doing right and what he is doing wrong. Then **prepare a written critique** of Mr. Miller's performance.

CASE STUDY

Dan Miller, a vocational teacher at Ridgewood Regional Vocational School, had a reputation of working very hard to help his students find and obtain employment. He had been at the school for 15 years and had a high success rate in the area of placement. Most of his students found adequate employment in local business.

To encourage employment, Mr. Miller kept a bulletin board in class and posted job openings listed in the newspaper and job information he received from local industries. He encouraged students to check the board regularly and often discussed unusual or interesting positions.

He maintained contact with several friends in the business community and often discussed with them which industries accepted the mentally and physically handicapped. Through these people, he compiled a file on the local companies that hired the handicapped and the types of jobs for which they were hired. He kept the file in a bookcase for students to use.

In addition, a few years ago Mr. Miller began visiting local businesses and talking to managers and personnel directors. He asked about entry-level requirements and the possibility of advancement for the handicapped. He was surprised at his findings; many companies refused to hire the mentally retarded or relegated them to custodial work. He was outraged at their ignorance.

At that time, he began a campaign to educate employers and increase opportunities for all students. First, he compared the requirements of each job with what the workers actually did. Then, he went to the employers and confronted them with his findings: that they required more skills and training than necessary. He offered to show them how to revise their requirements and restructure their jobs. He was disappointed when most of the companies refused his help.

Another technique that Mr. Miller used involved asking members of the business community to attend the school's annual career day and open houses. Furthermore, throughout the year he had several of his business friends talk to students about jobs. They were very willing to help and they employed students through the school's co-op programs. Mr. Miller was an advocate of work experience for vocational students while still in school. Often, students with exceptional needs who were placed in co-op programs got permanent employment with those companies after graduation.

Mr. Miller had 14 students in his class, 13 boys and 1 girl. It was the first time he had had a girl in his program. One of the boys, Jim, was confined to a wheelchair, and Mr. Miller was concerned about getting him placed on the job after graduation because of "industry's misconceptions about the abilities of the mentally and physically handicapped."

Mr. Miller had an active occupational advisory committee that he met with on a regular basis. He encouraged the members to offer suggestions on ways to better prepare students for work. He relied on them as an accurate source of information about the kinds of employment opportunities currently available.

At the beginning of the school term, he had asked an acquaintance of his, who owned a small business, to serve on the advisory committee. This person lost the use of one arm in an industrial accident many years ago. Mr. Miller hoped this person would be able to help him do a better job with Jim.

At the end of the program, he was able to place Jim on the job. But Karen, the girl in the program, complained to him that she wasn't able to find a position. She said that she had contacted all of his friends that he'd listed on the bulletin board and they had no more openings.

Then she asked him to help her by calling some of the employers himself. Mr. Miller refused. He was annoyed because she was expecting special treatment. After all, she had access to the same information as the other students and they were able to locate jobs on their own. The only one he had done anything extra for was Jim, who needed the special assistance because he was handicapped.

NOTES

Compare your written critique of the teacher's performance with the model critique given below. Your response need not exactly duplicate the model response; however, you should have covered the same **major** points.

MODEL CRITIQUE

Mr. Miller was on the right track in providing job information for his students and in trying to make employment available to them. His main problem was that he limited his concept of students with exceptional needs to the mentally and physically handicapped. His emphasis was on having a handicapped person serve on the advisory committee. In his dealings with employers, he stressed hiring the mentally and physically handicapped and looked for unnecessary barriers to that group.

When faced with a person with another type of exceptional needs—the girl in a program nontraditional for her sex—he was less effective. He was not accustomed to dealing with that situation and gave some indication that he didn't think she needed special help. He should have acquainted himself with the **various** exceptional needs categories and the particular problems of students with these needs.

His desire to help employers revise their entry-level requirements and restructure certain jobs was valid. However, his method of approaching employers was wrong. He determined—without their knowledge, permission, or support—what needed to be done and then confronted them with his findings.

He should have spent more time developing trust and rapport and making casual suggestions during informal conversations. Most companies resent outsiders telling them what to do and criticizing their procedures. As a result, they tend to become more defensive and opposed to any change. It is always better to let the employers think that it is their idea to make the changes.

Also, Mr. Miller's contacts in the business community seem to be somewhat limited. He had a friend serving on the advisory committee and invited friends to speak to students about jobs. He relied on these same people for employment information and had been successful in placing handicapped students in jobs provided by his friends. Therefore, his concept of what is available in the world of work may be unrealistic.

He should broaden his perspective by looking to other sources for employment data, such as government reports and minority organizations. Also, he should invite a wider range of employers to talk to students and not limit guest speakers to just his friends.

Finally, his relationship with the advisory committee and employers appears one-sided. He asked for their advice and suggestions but didn't spend any time in educating them. He should have helped them all become more familiar with the needs and capabilities of students with exceptional needs. As a result, they would be more aware of inequities in business and hopefully could bring about change.

Level of Performance: Your written critique of the teacher's performance should have covered the same **major** points as the model critique. If you missed some points or have questions about any additional points you made, review the material in the information sheet, Promoting Employment Opportunities, pp. 6–12, or check with your resource person if necessary.

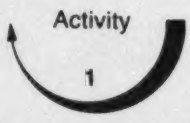
NOTES

17

Learning Experience II

OVERVIEW

After completing the required reading, identify the employability needs of two of the three students described in given case situations and plan appropriate techniques to meet those needs.

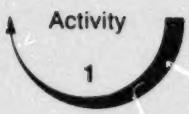


You will be reading the information sheet, Techniques for Teaching Employability Skills, pp. 18–29.

You may wish to start a file of the special programs in your community that are available to help students improve their employability skills. You may also wish to develop a list of jobs in your vocational-technical area that are available in the community.

You will be selecting two of the three Case Situations, pp. 29–32, identifying the employability needs of students described, and planning appropriate techniques to meet those needs.

You will be evaluating your competency in identifying the employability needs of students and in planning appropriate techniques to meet those needs by comparing your responses with the Model Solutions, pp. 33–34.



For information on how to identify students' employability needs and plan techniques to teach skills that will meet these needs, read the following information sheet.

TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Preparing students for the world of work involves more than training them in the technical skills required. Students with exceptional needs, because of their very specialness, tend to require additional help in locating and obtaining employment and in adjusting to the world of work. These students may have problems such as the following:

- Poor work attitudes
- Cultural differences (traits, life-styles, characteristics)
- Lack of basic skills (reading, writing, arithmetic, physical dexterity)
- Lack of knowledge about the world of work
- Lack of job-seeking/obtaining skills

Creating a Positive Work Attitude

Some students have a poor understanding of the **concept of work;** they do not understand the benefits of working. This could be due to any number of reasons. The student may come from a home where the income results entirely from welfare monies, perhaps because the father is disabled or the mother is unskilled and is raising the family alone. Thus, the student has no role model for working as a necessary daily activity.

Or the student may be a newly single woman—either as a result of a divorce or death—who has never thought of herself as a breadwinner. Or the student could be mentally or physically handicapped and unused to the idea that he or she has anything to contribute in the world of work.

Other students may not understand the **need for developing cooperative working relationships** in their places of employment. They may feel that it is necessary only to do their jobs, and they may not feel that being compatible with their co-workers is part of those jobs. However, many jobs require that several people work together in order to complete a task.

For example, on the assembly line each employee must perform at a certain rate of speed so the item can move on to the next phase. If some workers spend their time arguing or joking, they slow down production and create an uncomfortable environment for everyone.

Another problem may be that some students are unaware that their attitudes toward themselves and employment are reflected in their **appearance and attire.** For instance, if a young man attends an interview wearing jeans and with dirty, uncombed hair, the employer may feel he has a low regard for himself that will carry over to the job. Although the student may be very capable, his appearance tells the prospective employer the opposite. Some students, perhaps because of their social or economic backgrounds, may not understand the importance of good grooming in the world of work.

Praise and Encouragement

There are several techniques you can use to help students develop a positive work attitude. One way to promote acceptable behavior is with praise and encouragement. For example, assume that you have a student who is consistently late for class. You need to point out that an employer will expect him to be on time every day. When he is prompt, you should mention it and encourage him to continue. However, you should be careful not to overdo the praise, thereby embarrassing the student or appearing to make fun of him.

Perhaps another student neglects her appearance. You should explain the need for good grooming on the job and compliment her when she is properly dressed. Also, you can praise students for attending class regularly and for maintaining good relationships with others. Constant encouragement from you will make students more aware of what behavior—indicative of work attitudes—is acceptable.

You should also **help students with exceptional needs to understand the need for responsibility** in class and how it relates to employment. The auto mechanics instructor should require students to care for their tools and clean up their work area. He or she should explain that employers will expect them to perform such tasks on the job.

Perhaps a drafting instructor has a mentally retarded student in a class. She may not be able to do

detailed drawings but can handle other necessary phases of the job. The instructor could place her in charge of one aspect of the class, such as operating the blueprint machine. Having sole responsibility for that task should help her develop pride in her work and prepare her for employment.

In addition, you should **encourage students with exceptional needs to accept responsibility for their actions** in class. If they arrive late, make them responsible for finding out the homework assignments and the material already covered. Set a due date for a project or report but don't remind them of it every day.

Some students may need your direction for a longer period of time; however, you need gradually to increase their level of responsibility. By helping them to assume more control over their lives, you will be preparing them for the responsibilities they will have to shoulder in the work world. Explain that employers will not tolerate tardiness or having work assignments completed late. In class they are only reprimanded for such behavior; on the job they may be fired.

You as Role Model

Another technique you can employ is to be a role model for positive behavior. You may be an important adult in the lives of your students with exceptional needs. As such, you exert a great deal of influence on them. Your attitude and the way you act in class are constant examples of behavior on the job, either good or bad. Regardless of what you say, your actions will probably make a lasting impression on your students.

Your performance in class should **demonstrate the type of behavior that is acceptable** in the world of work. For example, you should use proper English and communicate at an appropriate level. If you speak ungrammatically or use slang terms, you are telling students that such language is acceptable.

Also, you should dress appropriately for your position as teacher. You have told them that they need to be concerned about their appearance. If you are poorly groomed and dressed, you are contradicting yourself.

You can also help your students develop a positive attitude toward work if you **show enthusiasm for your own job.** You should show that you enjoy your occupation and act interested and motivated in class. As a role model, you should obey the school rules and policies and avoid criticizing the administration or other teachers. You can show respect for yourself and others by being pleasant and controlling your temper.

In addition, you should act confident about your knowledge and abilities but be willing to admit that you don't have all the answers. Your positive attitude will be apparent to students, who will probably equate it with the way they should relate to employment.

To help you in attempting to create a positive environment, you might want to develop and use a checklist in class (see sample 1). You could fill out the checklist every day for one week and then evaluate your performance. You can use the sample checklist as is or as the basis for preparing your own.

Lessons Covering the Concept of Work

A third technique for helping students with exceptional needs to develop positive work attitudes is to prepare lesson plans that include specific information about **why people work** and **the need for positive work attitudes.** For example, you might want to develop a lesson that describes the benefits of work—earning a living, gaining personal self-respect, and building self-confidence.

You could explain that the nation cannot function without qualified people to produce the goods and services that are consumed daily. Students need to understand that everything they buy—food, clothes, jewelry, records—is manufactured by people just like themselves. Also, they need to realize that working provides the money to buy these items, support oneself, and be financially independent.

Furthermore, you could discuss **the feeling of accomplishment a person can attain** by being an active participant in the adult world. For example, work-

ing can allow the mentally retarded to be a part of society and to be accepted by others. They can gain permanent independence to live their own lives and not have to rely on parents or guardians.

For the economically disadvantaged, working can offer an escape from poverty and state subsidies. The elderly can reenter the mainstream of life by working either full- or part-time. Recent studies indicate that people who stay active often live longer and are in better physical condition.

Included in the lesson could be a discussion of **how working contributes to an individual's personal growth.** Students with exceptional needs can gain confidence by dealing with problems on the job and by associating with others.

Assume that one of your students is a middle-aged woman who plans to reenter the labor force after an absence of many years. She is recently divorced and must support herself for the first time. As a result, she is unsure of her abilities and worries about competing in industry. By pointing out the skills she will possess after completing your program, you can do much to ease her feelings of inferiority and build her self-esteem.

Since some students with exceptional needs may tend to enter the work force in menial, low-paying jobs, your lesson should help them develop a firm understanding of their capabilities. For example, if lower-level jobs are all they will ever be able to handle, they need to know that, in performing those jobs, they will be contributing, useful members of society. The mentally retarded student who learns only to operate the blueprint machine well has an important role to play in the world of work.

On the other hand, if these students have more advanced skills, you may need to help them (1) accurately identify the higher level of jobs they should be seeking and (2) prepare to successfully compete for those jobs.

In some cases, however, students with more advanced skills may need to learn how to "play the game"—entering at the lower level and then working hard and striving for the upper limits. A person can stay unemployed a long time looking for the perfect job, whereas he or she could be gaining valuable experience in a lower-level position and paving the way to advancement.

As a productive member of the work force, you are aware of the need for good grooming on the job, but as mentioned previously, some students with exceptional needs may require help in this area. You could prepare a lesson on the **dress and cleanliness requirements** of industry.

Such a lesson might include films that show the proper attire for interviews or that depict how the appropriate clothing can be used to help minimize physical handicaps. These types of films may help a student who is confined to a wheelchair understand that wearing a suit or a sports coat can (1) boost his morale and self-confidence and (2) encourage employers to view him in the same way as other applicants.

Similarly, a student who is a member of a minority group or who is economically disadvantaged may not be quite in tune with the dress standards of business and industry. Use of films can point out that being neatly dressed can help open the door for an interview so that the student has an opportunity to describe his/her skills.

The good grooming lesson also could include examples of what many businesses expect of employees. For instance, restaurants often require workers to wash their hands frequently and to wear hair nets, while doctors and dentists want their assistants to maintain strict personal hygiene.

SAMPLE 1

POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT CHECKLIST

Directions: Fill out the following checklist every day for one week. Place an X in the box beside each item that you accomplished on a given day. If an item was not applicable, place an N/A in the box. One column of boxes has been provided for each day of the week, Monday through Friday.

Name _____

Date _____

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1. I praised students for the following accomplishments:					
a. coming to class on time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. attending class regularly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. being well groomed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. dressing properly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. maintaining good relationships with others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. completing projects on time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. participating in class	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. following directions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. accepting criticism well	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. speaking grammatically correct English	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I insisted that students accept responsibility for the following tasks:					
a. completing assignments on time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. putting away tools and equipment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. keeping the work area clean	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I acted as positive role model by:					
a. speaking grammatically correct English	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. dressing appropriately for my position	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. showing enthusiasm for my job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. obeying school rules and policies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. not criticizing the administrator or other teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
f. controlling my temper	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. being polite to others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. admitting when I'm wrong	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. acting like an adult	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Recognizing Cultural Differences

The United States has always been the "melting pot" of the world—the place where people of many nationalities live together. As a result, there are students from a variety of backgrounds and cultures attending schools in this country. These students may have unique attitudes toward work and may not understand the taboos related to employment.

Therefore, you should **become aware** of the attitudes of the various cultures toward work so you can prepare students for life in the American work force. For example, in certain Indian and Hispanic cultures there is no competition because cooperation is stressed. American businesses, on the other hand, generally consider competition to be healthy, and they often encourage it among employees. Consequently, Indian and Spanish students may have difficulty participating in the competitive world of American business without adequate preparation.

Furthermore, the Chinese have a strict hierarchy and power structure in which their leader has the authority. Thus, these students may tend not to respond to your directions or to the directions of a supervisor in the work force.

Also, you should **identify possible conflicts** between certain careers and students' cultural backgrounds. For example, assume that a teacher of food preparation has a student who is a Muslim. Since Muslims are forbidden to touch pork, this student may refuse to make any dishes that require the use of pork. Therefore, the teacher would need to explain that many American restaurants serve pork and that the student will have to deal with that situation on the job. Or the teacher might suggest that the student specialize in an area not involved with meat, such as pastry chef.

A postsecondary instructor, who is trying to place students in medical assisting jobs in local hospitals and convalescent centers, could have trouble if one student is from a culture in which the elderly are kept at home and cared for by the family. This student might have difficulty working in a nursing home, where treatment of the aged could be completely unacceptable to him.

Furthermore, students from different cultures may not understand that some types of behavior are frowned on and could cause problems for them with management and with their peers. To **make students more aware of acceptable and unacceptable work behavior,** you could hold class discussions on the subject.

For example, you could talk about the morning and afternoon coffee breaks as a traditional part of the work day. In some cultures, taking a work break is unheard of, and employees from these cultures may want to work through their breaks—to keep the adrenaline flowing. American employees, on the other hand, tend to look forward to those two 15-minute periods as a rest from the routine and may resent co-workers who do not follow tradition. To reinforce the behavior, you could build a short break into class time.

Or you might need to discuss the restrictions against drinking alcoholic beverages on the job or arriving for work under the influence of alcohol. Businesses expect employees to be sober and capable of doing their jobs. The same restrictions apply to the use of other drugs in the work setting.

Also, certain cultures place a different emphasis on time; no one is offended if appointments or meetings run up to an hour late. However, American businesses tend to live by the clock; employers will expect workers

to arrive and leave at the appointed hour. Some students may have difficulty in relating to this concept because of their backgrounds.

For example, in many American businesses, employees work from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with an hour off for lunch. The Irish, on the other hand, begin their work day at 10:00 a.m., and the Spanish close offices for two hours every afternoon for a leisurely lunch and siesta. Thus, you may need to explain American work schedules and point out the consequences of being habitually late—termination.

Some students from different cultural backgrounds may have difficulty in accepting constructive criticism or the authority of the boss. Other cultures do not accept women as supervisors although that is a more common situation here.

To help these students understand the realities of the American work world, you can have role-playing sessions in which students act out both acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. They can practice giving and taking criticism and then comment on each other's performance. Such activities can help them understand what will be expected on the job.

Developing Additional Employability Skills

Many occupations require skills in addition to those taught in most vocational programs. For example, construction workers often need physical strength and stamina. Manual dexterity and coordination are important for jobs such as typist, machinist, or meat cutter.

Reading, writing, and oral communication are skills necessary for practically every occupation. A knowledge of basic mathematics is a valuable skill for jobs involving measurement and jobs involving money. Also important are those skills that supplement work, such as planning free time, organizing a household, preparing meals, or finding child care.

Some of your students with exceptional needs may need help in developing certain of these skills—skills that can make them more attractive to employers. You should identify any additional skills your students may need and refer them to appropriate programs to gain these skills and, thus, to increase their employability.

Physical Strength

In the logging industry, for example, it requires stamina and strength to climb trees and cut wood. Students interested in such careers may need to participate in special physical education courses to increase their strength. You could refer students to such courses, or you can encourage the school to offer such a course, if one does not exist.

Perhaps several female students are in vocational programs that require strength and good physical coordination. Many women can improve their coordination and strength by participating in sports. They can jog, swim, or play tennis or basketball to build muscles and develop stamina.

You should make students aware of the physical characteristics that they **can** change as well as those they **cannot** change. For example, the highway patrol has minimum height and maximum weight limits. The military requires eyesight that is good or correctable with glasses to a specified level. Students who do not meet these standards will not be able to work in those occupations. To ensure that students know these requirements, you may want to invite guest speakers from several different occupational areas to discuss the physical requirements of jobs in their industries.

Academic Skills

Improving students' academic skills is very important.[2] Many employees need to be able to read written instructions or safety signs to perform their jobs properly. They also need to read company memos, bulletin boards, hospitalization and insurance forms, brochures explaining benefits, vacation schedules, and retirement plans.

In many cases, employees must fill out time sheets, order forms, customer invoices, and requests for supplies. Also, it is necessary for employees to talk to each other and to their supervisors. They may need to answer questions, give directions, and greet customers.

Basic math skills are also needed by many employees. Cashiers must make change, mechanics must prepare bills for customers, and shop owners must pay for their merchandise. All employees should be able to add, subtract, multiply, and divide so they'll know if their pay checks are correct. In their private lives, they'll need to make rent payments, buy food and clothing, and pay taxes.

As part of your regular vocational instruction, you should be helping students improve their basic academic skills. However, some students with exceptional needs may require more help than you can provide. There are at least two ways in which you can get these students the help they need.

2. To gain skill in assisting students in improving their academic skills, you may wish to refer to modules in the M category. Modules M-1 to M-5, which deal with reading, writing, oral communication, and math, may be of particular interest.

Many schools offer **remedial classes** in reading, writing, and mathematics. You should identify the students with exceptional needs in your program who may need to improve greatly in these areas in order to be employable. You should then refer them to such courses. For example, assume that a student in an auto mechanics program has difficulty with reading comprehension. In order for her to perform in an actual job, she will need to be able to read work orders.

Or perhaps a student in a machine shop program has difficulty with simple mathematics. As a machinist, he will need an understanding of math in order to use precision measuring instruments for checking work. By referring such students to remedial classes, you will be helping them improve in the academic skills that are important in many occupations.

Another option is to arrange for **tutoring** in certain subjects for those students with exceptional needs who need additional assistance. Your school may maintain lists of qualified tutors. Or you could use the more advanced students in class to work with others on a "buddy" system. The "buddies" can read together and discuss the assignments and directions you may give.

Supplemental and Vocational Skills

Some students with exceptional needs may need help in developing **survival skills**—those skills needed to organize their time and manage their personal lives. They may not realize that their home lives can affect how well they perform their jobs. For example, students who live with their parents may be unaccustomed to doing the shopping, cleaning the apartment or house, or washing clothes. When called on to perform those tasks **and** go to work every day, they may feel overwhelmed.

You could invite a time management specialist to speak to the class on how to schedule these activities. Perhaps he/she could also talk about why working parents need to share household responsibilities and reserve time for the children. Or he/she might explain how people schedule their outside activities—sports, hobbies, leisure time—around their work.[3]

3. To gain skill in helping students manage their personal lives more efficiently, you may wish to refer to Module M-6, *Assist Students in Improving Their Survival Skills.*

Students also may need help in perfecting the **vocational skills** required in their chosen careers. For example, a mentally retarded person who is studying auto body repair might need more instruction in identifying tools. You can spend additional time with him in class or appoint another student to work with him. Or you could prepare a simple chart, which pictures and names each tool, for the student to use in class.

Furthermore, women in nontraditional courses, such as auto mechanics, may need help learning technical terminology with which they are not familiar. You could suggest books to read on the subject and give them extra assistance in class. Also, you could show a film about auto mechanics or invite a local mechanic to talk to the class about his/her occupation. Such presentations would be of interest to all students.

In some cases, **leadership skills** may be necessary for employees in business and industry—for example, in positions that require supervising others or giving directions to co-workers. People who pursue a nursing career, for instance, will need to assign tasks to aids and volunteers and deal with patients. In a hospital setting, they may need to supervise other nurses and take command in crisis situations.

If you have secondary students who are lacking in leadership skills, you can recommend that they participate in vocational student organizations or in other youth organizations such as Junior Achievement, Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts of America, or church associations. These groups are designed to cultivate leadership, build responsibility, and provide a bridge to adulthood.

You can direct postsecondary students to vocational student organizations, assertiveness training programs, Dale Carnegie courses, or public speaking classes. Also, you can promote leadership in class by having students work in groups and give oral presentations.

In most cases there are special programs available to help students improve their academic, vocational, and leadership skills. You should make yourself aware of the resources in your school and community and use them. Your students will benefit from the additional training and, as a result, will be better prepared to enter the world of work.

Introducing the Realities of Employment

Life on the job will be a new experience for many students with exceptional needs. Those who have worked part-time will have some concept of what is expected, but others will need a full explanation. For example, students from different cultures may not be familiar with working conditions or their rights as employees. They may not know that industry must provide them with safety equipment, if necessary, and protect them from injury on the job.

Furthermore, older women entering the employment market for the first time may have no knowledge of typical salary ranges or opportunities for advancement. As a result, women tend to receive lower wages than men. Research indicates that one reason for this occurrence is that women ask employers what salary they will receive, whereas men state what salary they will accept. Women have assumed that they must take what is offered just to get the job.

Thus, you need to plan experiences that will introduce students with exceptional needs to the realities of the employment situation. Numerous techniques can be used for this purpose. Former students and other representatives of the work force—employers, employees, and union representatives—can be asked to speak to the class. Students can be taken on field trips to various companies so they can see workers actually performing on the job.

Students can also be encouraged to attend school open houses, where they can meet and talk to local employers and employees. They can be informed about local trade shows that they could attend to learn about a particular business or industry.

You could present short units of instruction concerning the realities of employment. You can identify literature and audiovisuals that describe and explain employment conditions, and you can make this material available to your students. And, probably most effective of all, you can arrange for students to gain actual work experience on a limited basis (e.g., through part-time jobs, work-study programs, early placement, shadowing, or volunteer work).

Through the use of techniques such as these, students can get answers to their questions about employment. They can find out specific information, such as the following, about the job for which they are training:

- What the job involves
- What the physical facilities are like
- What products are produced and what they look like
- What related jobs are available within the occupational area
- Employer and employee rights and responsibilities
- Working conditions
- Salary schedules (e.g., minimum wage, pay scales, starting salaries)
- Prospects for advancement
- Attitudes of employers and employees toward persons with exceptional needs

In addition, students can learn more about themselves and their role in the world of work through these experiences. If, for instance, you ensure that at least some of the employees whom you invite in as guest speakers—or whom students observe on the job—have exceptional needs, students with exceptional needs can learn that one reality of the employment situation is that they can **succeed** in it.

Having firsthand experiences in actual jobs, too, can be valuable for students with exceptional needs, who may be apprehensive about competing with others. For example, a Puerto Rican girl, who understands English but has some difficulty in speaking the language, may be fearful of being ridiculed by coworkers.

Similarly, an economically disadvantaged boy may have a poor concept of his abilities and feel inferior to others. Providing these students with early, carefully planned and supervised work experiences can help them overcome their fears and doubts so that they can function effectively in their chosen careers.

Developing Job-Seeking Skills

Looking for employment takes time and may be a difficult process, particularly for students with exceptional needs. They may need additional instruction in how to locate job openings, how to fill out paperwork, and how to interview. For example, an older woman reentering the work force may have no idea of the jobs available to her. A student who speaks English as a second language or a mentally retarded student may have difficulty understanding the questions on job application forms. You need to help these students develop their job-seeking skills.

Locating Jobs

First, you may need to explain to your students how to locate job openings. Some of them may have very little idea of how to go about seeking employment. For example, a girl enrolled in auto mechanics might think that working in a gas station is her only option. She needs to understand that many agencies—such as automobile dealerships, cab companies, state governments, and universities—hire mechanics. An older person reentering the labor market might need a refresher about where to look for work.

You can provide these students with a list of possible job leads, which might include the following:

- State bureau of employment services
- City, state, and federal government offices
- Community organizations
- Special interest groups such as National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) or National Organization for Women (NOW)
- Labor unions
- Committees on employment of the handicapped
- Newspaper want ads
- Yellow Pages of the telephone directory
- Family and friends
- Vocational rehabilitation counselors
- Private employment agencies

In presenting these options to students with exceptional needs, you may need to be quite specific, indicating not only where information is available but also how to go about getting that information: What types of job-seeking help does each organization provide? Whom do you contact? Are there costs involved? What steps must you follow? In the newspapers, where are the want ads located? How are they organized? How do you read them? How do you find employers in the telephone book?

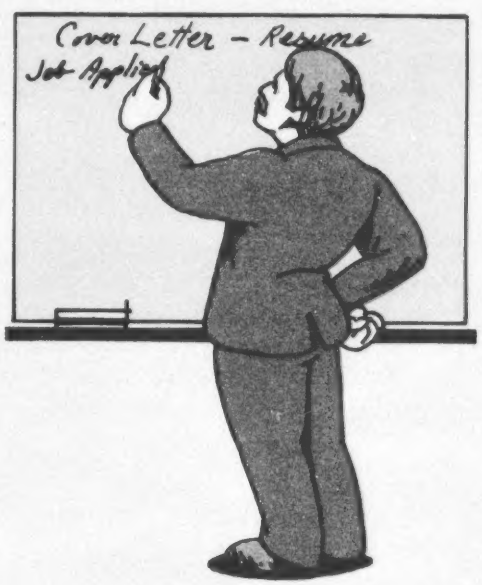
With students who need help in this area, clear, simple, thorough information is crucial. Explain fully. Be specific. Bring phone books and newspapers to class and **show** students with exceptional needs how to use them.

You may also need to make students aware of various job opportunities that might not occur to them. For example, for those whose native language is not English, their bilingual ability can be a real asset in the employment market. They could work (1) for government agencies that deal with minority groups, (2) for businesses that employ limited-English-speaking workers, (3) for companies that do business with foreign countries, or (4) as aides or paraprofessionals with bilingual children at the preschool and elementary levels.[4]

Filling Out Paperwork

Second, you may need to help students with exceptional needs develop their ability to complete the paperwork necessary to apply for a job. They will need to prepare letters of application and resumés, fill out application forms, and apply for social security cards and union memberships. However, they may have difficulty with this process.

For example, mentally retarded students might need assistance in understanding and formulating answers to some of the questions that appear on the application form. One way is to assist these students is to help them prepare a list of answers to common questions, which they can take with them when apply-



4. To gain skill in helping students locate job openings, you may wish to refer to Module F-4, *Provide Information on Educational and Career Opportunities.*

ing for jobs. Another way to improve their skills is to spend a longer amount of time explaining the application form and then to work with them on only **one** section each day in class.

Do not assume that these forms are simple; for some students they are not. You may need to have students practice filling out the forms so they will become familiar with the types of questions normally included. You might also help them formulate answers to questions that concern their handicaps. For example, they may need to be able to explain briefly why their particular handicap does not affect their ability to work.

You may also need to help students with exceptional needs prepare resumés that stress their talents and accomplishments. They may be overly conscious of their disabilities and not see the positive side of what they can do.

Assume, for example, that one of your students is an older man who lost his job because of technological advances. He is concerned about starting over at his age and doubts that his previous experience will be of any help in finding work in his new occupation. You can help him select the items from his past that will be the most impressive to new employers, for example:

- Employed continuously for 20 years with one company
- Maintained excellent attendance record
- Served on employee/management committees
- Honored by company for money-saving suggestion

Such a student may also need to be reminded of other experiences that should be included in the resumé (e.g., community or charitable activities, additional education or training).

Interviewing

Third, students with exceptional needs may need assistance in developing effective job interview skills. There are several excellent techniques you can use to prepare students for the job interview. You could develop a list of possible questions an employer might ask and then have the students practice interviewing each other. If possible, you should videotape their performances so they can view them later and discuss what they did well and what needs improvement.

Also, you can show films on the interview process to make students more familiar with the procedure. Or you could invite a professional interviewer from a business or an employment agency to conduct a realistic interview in class. This would allow students to ask questions about the qualities an employer looks for in an applicant.

Students will need to know that they must prepare for the interview by **gathering specific information** about the company and the job for which they are applying. You can give students with exceptional needs an edge by helping them locate such information or by referring them to the library or to someone who works on the job.

Since the point of an interview is to find out why an applicant should or should not be hired, you will want your students to understand that they should describe their skills right away—to discuss the experiences, training, and personal qualities that qualify them for employment. You can spend time in class helping your students with exceptional needs to prepare this information about themselves.

You should also explain that, during the interview, employers will look at an applicant's **ability to talk and listen.** Some students with exceptional needs may have difficulties in these areas, but you can help them by offering valuable tips, such as the following:

- Speak as clearly as you can. Don't mumble.
- Listen carefully to what the employer says. The employer will usually lead the interview; you should follow his/her lead.
- Don't interrupt, but do ask questions if you don't understand something.
- Look at the employer, not at the floor. "Eye contact" is an important way of showing that you're paying attention.

You should point out to students that they can emphasize their abilities by presenting them in the best possible way.

Students with obvious handicaps need to know that they should not wait to be asked by the interviewer for an explanation of the handicapping condition. In the first few minutes of the interview, they should explain to the employer why their handicap will not interfere with their ability to do the job. In addition, they should be told to answer any additional questions as truthfully as possible. The interviewer should respect their honesty and, therefore, be more likely to view them on the same basis as other applicants.

Also, you will want students with exceptional needs to understand that "open-ended" questions require **job-related** answers. For example, when the interviewer says "tell me about yourself," he/she does not expect the applicant to talk about personal or financial matters. Students need to understand that they should always answer in terms of the job and their qualifications.

Finally, you may need to point out that, following the interview, an applicant should write a **follow-up letter** thanking the company for its time and consideration.

You can help students with exceptional needs to practice writing such letters in class. Perhaps you can show them examples of good follow-up letters and make a list of the important points that the letter should cover.[5]

Being Rejected

Fourth, you should prepare students for the possibility that they will be rejected for a job. Most people contact quite a few employers and are turned down several times before being hired. Students with exceptional needs may encounter rejection more often, so you want them to understand the need for persistence.

They may also be more sensitive to rejection and feel that they are turned down because they **are** special. You should explain to them that, if they become discouraged and give up, they will never find a job. The key to successful job hunting is optimism and determination. They must keep trying and expect that the next employer will hire them. Also, they should keep in mind that they might be second choice for a job and could get the position with the next vacancy.

Leaving a Job

Once students are employed, they need to consider the possibility that they may leave that job some day. There is a professional way to do it, and some students will not know the correct procedure to follow. You need to make sure that they know that they should give their employers at least two weeks' notice so that the employers have the opportunity to hire replacements.

In addition, they need to understand that it is important to continue to do their job as usual and avoid criticizing the company, since they may want a recommendation sometime in the future. Remind students that frequent job changes look bad on their employment record and might cause employers to think they are unreliable.

Placing Students

One final test of any vocational program is whether the students are prepared to obtain employment. Finding that first job is generally the most difficult, so any assistance you can provide will be very beneficial. Students with exceptional needs may need more help in getting jobs, and there are several ways you can assist them.

As a vocational-technical instructor, you should have contacts within the industry. This gives you an opportunity to place or help place students in jobs of their choice. If you have worked to develop good working relationships with local employers, you will hear of available positions and can recommend qualified applicants. Your **referral** can be a positive influence on employers. Also, you may be in a position to encourage employers to give students with exceptional needs a chance on the job. You could visit several companies that have positions available and promote the hiring of your students.

During the job-finding process, employers often will contact you for **recommendations** or information about students. You should give them an honest appraisal of each individual's capabilities. You should be sure to stress the students' abilities and talents. You have trained them well—let employers know that they are ready and able to join the work force. However, you should also tell a prospective employer of the students' limitations so he/she doesn't have unrealistic expectations.

For example, consider the case of a mildly retarded student who is applying for a job as a production welder. The welding instructor should be sure to explain to prospective employers (1) that the student does excellent work on simple, routine welds, (2) that since routine welding is an important industrial task, the student is qualified for the job, but that (3) the student cannot handle complicated projects.

Once students with exceptional needs have obtained employment, they may need your help in making the transition from school to work. The environment and daily routine will be different—longer hours, less personal attention—and some workers with exceptional needs might experience apprehension. You can help by providing **follow-up services** and by encouraging new workers to use them.

For example, if they are having difficulty in adjusting, you can visit them on the job, try to answer their questions, and assure them that soon they will feel very comfortable. Perhaps you can talk to employers, if they are willing, to find out about students' progress. You could also offer to help with any problems. Another possibility is to contact the new workers by phone or mail. You can survey their reactions to employment and locate trouble areas.

However, you should remember that, although many schools offer follow-up services, former students often do not take advantage of the program. For whatever reasons, they choose to "go it alone." They do not seek the help that could make their early working life much easier. As a result, you need to keep in mind that you can help only those who come to you. It is not realistic to seek out all former students, even though you know that some could benefit from the follow-up services.

On the other hand, your follow-up activities will be valuable to the students who participate and also will

5. To gain additional skill in helping students apply for jobs, you may wish to refer to Module F-5, *Assist Students in Applying for Employment or Further Education.*

be helpful to you. You will be able to track the success of your students and pinpoint topics that you may need to spend more time on in class. The result will be a well-designed program that produces workers who are prepared to follow their chosen careers.

In working with exceptional students, it is often helpful to have additional employment information on hand. Therefore, you may wish to start a file of the special programs in your school or community that are available to help students with exceptional needs to improve their skills. Also, you may wish to develop a list of jobs in your occupational area that are available in your community. You can accomplish these tasks by contacting community service organizations, supplemental educational institutions, and local businesses and industries.

Select and read two of the following three case situations describing the educational backgrounds and personal lives of three students with exceptional needs. As you read each situation, try to identify the student's employability needs. Then **describe in writing** what techniques you would use to meet those needs and to prepare the student to obtain employment.

CASE SITUATIONS

Case Situation 1:

Frank Antonelli, 26, is a Vietnam veteran who has just enrolled in the dental laboratory technician program. Frank's spinal cord was severed when he was hit by a fragment from a land mine in a Vietcong ambush. The injury left him paralyzed from the waist down and with loss of bowel and bladder control. Frank is now confined to a wheelchair and, by all indications, will never walk again.

Prior to enrolling, Frank spent several years in veterans' hospitals undergoing operations, therapy, and counseling. He was released from his most recent series of medical treatments nine months ago in the hope that he could resume a productive life. The doctors also felt that a return to normalcy would help bring about positive changes in Frank's attitudes and general personality.

Before he was wounded, Frank was thought to be a well-integrated, sensitive, highly intelligent, and talented individual. He had been brought up in a home where both artistic pursuits and technical expertise were valued. Paul Antonelli, Frank's father, is an electrical engineer who manages a thriving family business. His mother, Maria, is a buyer for a large garment manufacturing firm, as well as an accomplished interior decorator and musician.

An only child, Frank was exposed to both his mother's and his father's worlds. In high school he had excelled in physics, math, and chemistry, had been an expert swimmer and a member of the school's gymnastic team, and had played in the high school band.

Frank had hoped to become a dentist and, just before he was drafted, he had been accepted in the predental course at a major university. At that time he had become engaged to his high school sweetheart, Denise, whom he hoped to marry after completing his undergraduate degree.

The relationship with Denise broke up a month before Frank sustained his injury in Vietnam, and the breakup seemed to have adversely affected his self-confidence. Frank had always been a sensitive person and, after losing Denise and becoming disabled, he became prone to extreme mood changes and extended periods of depression.

He appeared to be frequently assailed by feelings of self-doubt, inadequacy, and futility. Normally soft-spoken and even-tempered, he would shout and throw objects around in frustration and despair. These mood swings, coupled with his withdrawal periods, made interaction with him extremely trying—even for his parents, with whom he has been living since coming back from Vietnam.

Frank has shown interest in doing intricate work with his hands and has sometimes helped his father with

complex wiring jobs. However, his unpredictable responses have prevented this from becoming a viable partnership. He seems to become very easily frustrated if he encounters difficulty while performing a task; he loses interest and concentration. His general demeanor is one of sullen hostility and bitterness.

Frank has emphatically stated that he no longer wants to become a dentist. He feels that his disability has weakened him to the point that he could not cope with the physical and academic requirements of the course. He has also not resolved the psychological problems caused by his bowel and bladder dysfunctions and is extremely embarrassed by a situation that he feels is socially unacceptable. He is, therefore, very uncomfortable in the presence of strangers.

Frank decided to return to school in the hope that he would feel less dependent and useless. His parents applauded the decision and were rather relieved that he would at last be doing something productive.

However, Frank has since become less than enthusiastic about being in school because of his shame at having to wear the special apparatus for his bowel and bladder problem. He does not like being in close quarters with the other members of the class and has found it difficult to concentrate on the academic work, which would normally have come easily to him.

He feels now that he should not have tried to become a dental laboratory technician. He feels that he may have enrolled in the program merely to compensate for the fact that he could not become a dentist. After a semester at the community college, Frank has done poorly in all his courses, and the brief flicker of ho' e that he felt in the beginning has begun to dwindl

Case Situation 2:

Kim Deveaux is a tall, shy 19-year-old who is presently enrolled in the regular home economics program. However, since she has been diagnosed as mentally retarded, she receives her academic instruction (e.g., math, English) through the special education department. Her goal is to be an elementary school teacher.

Kim is 20 pounds overweight for her 5'8" frame. Her clothes always look somewhat rumpled, and she tends to slouch in an effort to appear smaller than she really is. Kim's physical awkwardness and slow, stuttering speech have contributed to her social maladjustment. The other students tease her for being slow, and their teasing has been difficult for Kim to take as she is very sensitive about being in the special education classes.

Kim's father, Dr. Edward Deveaux, is a NASA scientist, and her mother is a college graduate. Both parents have had unrealistically high expectations for Kim because her older sister, Carrie, has excelled both scholastically and socially. They have found it difficult to accept Kim's slowness and social backwardness and have pressured her to "do better" in school.

Kim feels that, to gain the acceptance and approval of her parents, she must perform well. Her parents have never been demonstrative in their affection toward her or Carrie, but Kim feels that they love Carrie more than they love her.

Kim's IQ has been tested at 63 on the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, and her verbal ability is higher than her numerical ability. Her cumulative records indicate that she has a short attention span and prefers to take an inactive role in class. When called on to answer a question, Kim will frequently need to be reminded what the question is by the teacher. She appears to be daydreaming much of the time in her classes. When something holds her attention, however, Kim does creditable work.

Kim has always preferred to work independently with tutorial assistance from the teacher. She does very poorly in group sessions involving discussion because she is not a good listener and does not like to speak before groups. Individualized learning packages involving a good deal of "hands-on" activity appeal to Kim. She enjoys working on these projects and actively seeks the teacher's assistance when she doesn't understand the directions.

Kim has always been comfortable in working with her teachers on a one-on-one basis. Her present special education teacher feels that Kim regards her as a mother-figure and that she looks to her for some of the attention and affection that she doesn't get at home.

Kim has spent a great deal of time at the neighbor's house helping the mother with daily chores and taking care of the four children. Her neighbor has gained a great deal of confidence in Kim's ability to take care of the children responsibly and has paid her for babysitting for the past year. Kim is good with children and enjoys spending time with them, often participating with them in their games. She is affectionate with the children and enjoys fixing them snacks and changing the baby's diaper.

Case Situation 3:

Barbara Johnson is 17 and the youngest of seven children. Her parents' youngest child was 15 years old when Barbara was born. In many ways, she is an only child. Her mother is 50; her father is 55. All her siblings live away from home, but they come home often to visit.

The Johnson family home is located in a neighborhood where all the homes are moderately priced. Barbara was born in a low-income neighborhood, but Mr. Johnson was able to buy a nice home for the family six years ago after all the other children had left home. The children occasionally send money to help support their parents.

Mrs. Johnson worked as a maid for several years. She stopped working when Barbara was three years old. The two families for whom she worked became disturbed over the involvement of Barbara's brother Wendall in the civil rights movement and felt it would be best if Mrs. Johnson did not work for them anymore. Wendell was pleased that his mother was no longer working for the white families. He had long resented the hand-me-downs they would give his mother at Christmastime.

Mrs. Johnson had not been trained for any other work and remained unemployed for many years. For the past three years, however, she has served as a driver delivering meals to individuals participating in the Meals-on-Wheels program.

Mr. Johnson has always supported his family through his employment as a mail carrier. He has worked as a mail carrier for the past 30 years and plans to retire in a few years. However, he wants to be sure Barbara is out of school before he retires. He describes her as being a bit "hot-headed" at times, and he doesn't want to retire without knowing that she is trained for suitable employment.

Barbara makes average grades, but many of her efforts are hampered due to her prominent use of nonstandard English. Her cultural awareness has heightened her racial pride, and many of the black students look to her as their spokesperson when they have grievances.

Barbara wears a short-cropped Afro hairstyle and shuns conventional jewelry and dress. She feels her use of nonstandard English is a natural part of her heritage and, although it has interfered with her school work, she does not wish to abandon it. Her teachers become upset over Barbara's use of nonstandard English, and their attitudes only serve to convince Barbara that she must retain the language, which she feels is uniquely black.

Many of the students in Barbara's class have always lived in her neighborhood. The middle-class life-style has exposed most of them to books, cultural activities, and so on. They speak fluently and write well. At first Barbara tried to conform, but she has found that nonstandard English—the language that she knew for the first 12 years of her life and that is spoken by many of her friends in her old neighborhood—cannot be forgotten. Barbara does not want to lose her standing among her peers in the old neighborhood and is afraid of appearing snobbish if she does not continue to speak their language.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson keep track of Barbara's progress in school, and they have been concerned over her grades in English and literature. Their conference with her teachers revealed that Barbara just doesn't try and her attitude is distasteful to them. Barbara claims, however, that the teachers just don't like her because she is assertive. She looks forward to completing high school so that she can complete her training and get a good job.

Compare your written responses to the case situations with the model solutions given below. Your responses need not exactly duplicate the model responses; however, you should have covered the same **major** points.

MODEL SOLUTIONS

Case Situation 1:

Given Frank's family background, it is likely that he values work, is familiar with the world of work, and knows how—theoretically—to seek and apply for a job. Furthermore, from what we know about his high school activities, it is unlikely that he is weak in basic skills.

Frank's physical disability—and the psychological and emotional difficulties it has caused—have badly affected his self-concept and the way in which he relates to the rest of the world. This will greatly hinder his chances of being successfully employed unless he has help.

If you were the instructor in the dental laboratory technician program, you would need to deal with two primary employability problems in this case: Frank's lack of knowledge about the realities of employment **for the physically handicapped** and Frank's poor self-concept.

To help Frank understand the realities of employment, you could use a variety of techniques to expose him to the fact that the physically handicapped can and do succeed on the job. You could identify print or audiovisual materials that describe how people with similar conditions have succeeded in the world of work. If possible, you could arrange for him to visit and talk to successfully employed persons who share his conditions.

In addition, it would probably be very helpful for Frank if he could participate in some actual job experiences. It may be possible that his original career goal—to be a dentist—is not unattainable. It may be that, by successfully working in a dental laboratory, he may be motivated to pursue a career as a laboratory technician. Regardless, discovering that he can, in fact, perform the tasks required might give Frank the boost he needs.

Frank obviously has the mental capacity to succeed in the program, and he previously had been an overachiever. If Frank could just get past the poor self-concept and revive his previous drive to succeed, he could be a very satisfied and useful member of the work force.

Your praise and support of Frank in class could be very important factors in improving his self-concept. In addition, referring him to counseling (e.g., through a veterans association) and linking him to role models who have "overcome" their handicaps might also help Frank improve his image of himself.

Another option might be to use the buddy system—to pair Frank with another student in the class with whom he can talk and to whom he can relate. In this way, Frank might be able to overcome his insecurity about his bowel and bladder problem—an insecurity that would prevent his ever getting a job involving contact with other human beings. Even a job interview would be difficult for Frank unless he can get over this particular insecurity.

Assuming that you could, through these efforts, help Frank improve his self-concept, feel comfortable working with others, and restore his drive to pursue a particular career, one additional task might be required. Frank may need assistance in learning how to present himself and his handicap during the job-seeking process.

First Frank needs to learn to be at ease with himself, and then in job-seeking situations, he needs to be able to put others at ease. He needs to be able to admit his limitations and sell his strengths. If you could help him to do these things, Frank's employability problems should be minimized.

Case Situation 2:

Kim's employability problems will probably relate to her shyness, poor self-concept, sloppy appearance, mental retardation, and unrealistic career goal. If you were Kim's home economics teacher, you would need to help her in these areas.

Because of Kim's strong interest and ability in working with children, the home economics program is probably right for her. However, she needs help in selecting a career that fits her capabilities. She needs to understand that the requirement for being an elementary teacher—a college education—is prob-

ably beyond her reach. But she also needs to understand that there are other jobs, involving working with children, that she could seek and obtain.

You could help Kim redefine her career goal by (1) providing her with literature and audiovisuals that describe the variety of careers in child care and (2) helping her select those appropriate for her skill level (e.g., nursery school aide or mother's helper). You could also provide her with opportunities to "try out" these jobs. This would probably quickly convince her of their suitability to her abilities and preferences.

If the home economics program includes a unit in which students operate a play school for a short period of time, this might help. You might also arrange for Kim to do volunteer work at a neighborhood school, assisting the teacher with games and snacks. These job experiences might also help improve Kim's self-concept. Nothing succeeds like success. In addition, however, Kim would need a good deal of in-class support and praise.

Kim's inability to relate to her peers does not seem to be an employability problem. She relates well to the neighbor and her children. (Perhaps, it is the peers who need help in accepting Kim's differences.)

Kim will probably need help, however, in the job-seeking process. When it comes to actually looking for a job, Kim will probably need your help in locating and contacting prospective employers. She will need to learn about the importance of good grooming in making a favorable impression on employers.

Because Kim is self-conscious and shy, she will probably need more help in preparing for job interviews. You could spend time with Kim role-playing the interview—having her answer questions and explain her qualifications. Perhaps you could have another student play the part of interviewer and ask Kim questions.

Role-playing would give Kim the opportunity to develop responses on her own. Also, dealing with another student might help break down her shyness and make her more comfortable with strangers. The practice should help prepare her for actual job interviews.

And with the help of a well-prepared and honest recommendation from you, Kim could more easily enter and succeed in the world of work.

Case Situation 3:

Barbara's overemphasis on her black heritage and her persistent use of nonstandard English may be her main employability problems. There is nothing wrong with cultural identity, but Barbara is letting it interfere with her ability to function in the real world in which she must live. Also, her attitude is defensive and belligerent, which may make it even more difficult for her to obtain and retain a job.

Barbara wants to complete school so she can get a good job. She will need to understand that her language skills will have an effect on the kind of job she gets. Applicants with poor language skills often get lower-paying positions.

Perhaps you could have her talk to some successful black workers about (1) their experiences, (2) the need to use standard English in the world of work, and (3) appropriate modes of dress for the work situation. They might be able to help her realize that modifying her style of dress and giving up the use of nonstandard English **in school** and **on the job** are not the same as giving up her culture.

Barbara needs to understand that no one is asking her to reject her culture—to completely eliminate her use of nonstandard English or to give up her unique sense of fashion. She just needs to be aware that there are different language forms and styles of dress—and that what may be appropriate with peers may not be appropriate in the world of work. If she understands that, she may be more willing to cooperate.

Since her formative years were spent in learning and speaking nonstandard English, she will probably need special help with language skills. You could refer her to a remedial English program or suggest a tutor. You could also recommend books and educational television programs to familiarize her with standard English.

Finally Barbara may need some assistance in learning to be successful in the job-seeking process. She must learn to balance (1) her need to display her black pride and (2) her need to present an acceptable image to prospective employees. You might suggest that she participate in role-playing situations involving job interviews. By videotaping these situations, she might get a new perspective on the way she "comes across." She might more easily be able to see herself as others see her.

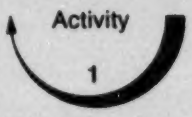
With your assistance, she should be able to devise an approach to job seeking—a way of speaking and dressing—that satisfies both her needs.

Level of Performance: Your written responses to the case situations should have covered the same **major** points as the model solutions. If you missed some points or have questions about any additional points you made, review the information sheet, Techniques for Teaching Employability Skills, pp. 18–29, or check with your resource person if necessary.

Learning Experience III

FINAL EXPERIENCE

In an **actual teaching situation,*** prepare exceptional students for employability.



As part of your duties as a teacher, prepare students with exceptional needs for employability. This will include—

- establishing a representative advisory committee
- gathering specific employment data
- promoting additional employment opportunities
- identifying students' employability needs
- planning techniques to meet those needs
- helping students obtain employment

NOTE: As you complete each of the above activities, document your actions (in writing, on tape, through a log) for assessment purposes.

Arrange in advance to have your resource person review your documentation and observe at least one lesson in which you cover information or skills related to employability.

Your total competency will be assessed by your resource person, using the Teacher Performance Assessment Form, pp. 37–39.

Based upon the criteria specified in this assessment instrument, your resource person will determine whether you are competent in preparing exceptional students for employability.

*For a definition of "actual teaching situation", see the inside back cover.

NOTES

TEACHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FORM

Prepare Exceptional Students for Employability (L-12)

Name _____

Date _____

Resource Person _____

Directions: Indicate the level of the teacher's accomplishment by placing an X in the appropriate box under the LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE heading. If, because of special circumstances, a performance component was not applicable, or impossible to execute, place an X in the N/A box.

	LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE					
	N/A	None	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Teacher Preparation						
1. The teacher included on the occupational advisory committee persons familiar with the exceptional needs of the students enrolled in his/her classes, including one or more of the following:						
a. persons who have exceptional needs themselves	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. employers of individuals with exceptional needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. specialists in dealing with persons with exceptional needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The teacher ensured that all committee members were adequately informed about students' exceptional needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The teacher gathered adequate and accurate information concerning the actual employment opportunities available locally for students with exceptional needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employer/Union Preparation						
4. To sensitize employers/unions to the capabilities of students with exceptional needs and, thus, to promote employment opportunities and job placement, the teacher used a variety of techniques, including:						
a. brochures and information packets.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. media presentations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. presentations at open houses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. co-op programs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. To encourage the hiring of students with exceptional needs, the teacher personally met with employers and union officials to:						
a. enlist their cooperation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. increase their awareness of the benefits of hiring these students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. assist them in eliminating discrimination in existing hiring, promotion, and membership practices (if necessary)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE

	N/A	None	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
d. assist them in reviewing job descriptions to ensure they do not unnecessarily preclude the employment of individuals with exceptional needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. assist them in restructuring jobs (if appropriate)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The teacher used tact and diplomacy in his/her contacts with employers/unions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student Preparation						
7. The teacher identified the employability needs of his/her students with exceptional needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Based on student needs, the teacher planned for and provided information concerning the realities of employment, including:						
a. the concept of work and why it is important	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. employer rights and expectations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. actual work conditions and attitudes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. salary schedules	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. opportunities for advancement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. the expanding role of women in the American labor force	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. employee job rights and responsibilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. acceptable and unacceptable behaviors on the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. If necessary, the teacher referred students to other programs that could help them increase their employability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. The teacher encouraged the development of positive work attitudes and behaviors by:						
a. explaining how responsibility in class relates to employment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. reinforcing positive work behaviors exhibited by students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. presenting a positive role model for employability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. arranging for students to observe positive role models on the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. The teacher arranged appropriate activities to expand students' awareness of appropriate job opportunities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE					
	N/A	None	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
12. The teacher ensured that students were adequately prepared to handle the procedural aspects of locating, seeking, and exiting from a job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. The teacher provided an appropriate amount of assistance to students during the placement process	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. If necessary, the teacher offered follow-up services to students during the initial stages of employment to ease the transition from school to work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. The teacher provided employers with an honest appraisal of each student's capabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Level of Performance: All items must receive N/A, GOOD, or EXCELLENT responses. If any item receives a NONE, POOR, or FAIR response, the teacher and resource person should meet to determine what additional activities the teacher needs to complete in order to reach competency in the weak area(s).

NOTES

ABOUT USING THE NATIONAL CENTER'S PBTE MODULES

Organization

Each module is designed to help you gain competency in a particular skill area considered important to teaching success. A module is made up of a series of learning experiences, some providing background information, some providing practice experiences, and others combining these two functions. Completing these experiences should **enable** you to achieve the **terminal** objective in the final learning experience. The final experience in each module always requires you to demonstrate the skill in an actual teaching situation when you are an intern, a student teacher, an inservice teacher, or occupational trainer.

Procedures

Modules are designed to allow you to individualize your teacher education program. You need to take only those modules covering skills that you do not already possess. Similarly, you need not complete any learning experience within a module if you already have the skill needed to complete it. Therefore, before taking any module, you should carefully review (1) the introduction, (2) the objectives listed on p. 4, (3) the overviews preceding each learning experience, and (4) the final experience. After comparing your present needs and competencies with the information you have read in these sections, you should be ready to make one of the following decisions:

- That you do not have the competencies indicated and should complete the entire module
- That you are competent in one or more of the enabling objectives leading to the final learning experience and, thus, can omit those learning experiences
- That you are already competent in this area and are ready to complete the final learning experience in order to "test out"
- That the module is inappropriate to your needs at this time

When you are ready to complete the final learning experience **and** have access to an actual teaching situation, make the necessary arrangements with your resource person. If you do not complete the final experience successfully, meet with your resource person and arrange to (1) repeat the experience or (2) complete (or review) previous sections of the module or other related activities suggested by your resource person before attempting to repeat the final experience.

Options for recycling are also available in each of the learning experiences preceding the final experience. Any time you do not meet the minimum level of performance required to meet an objective, you and your resource person may meet to select activities to help you reach competency. This could involve (1) completing parts of the module previously skipped, (2) repeating activities, (3) reading supplementary resources or completing additional activities suggested by the resource person, (4) designing your own learning experience, or (5) completing some other activity suggested by you or your resource person.

Terminology

Actual Teaching Situation: A situation in which you are actually working with and responsible for teaching secondary or postsecondary vocational students or other occupational trainees. An intern, a student teacher, an inservice teacher, or other occupational trainer would be functioning in an actual teaching situation. If you do **not** have access to an actual teaching situation when you are taking the module, you can complete the module **up to** the final learning experience. You would then complete the final learning experience later (i.e., when you have access to an actual teaching situation).

Alternate Activity or Feedback: An item that may **substitute** for required items that, due to special circumstances, you are unable to complete.

Occupational Specialty: A specific area of preparation within a vocational service area (e.g., the service area Trade and Industrial Education includes occupational specialties such as automobile mechanics, welding, and electricity).

Optional Activity or Feedback: An item that is not required but that is designed to **supplement** and enrich the required items in a learning experience.

Resource Person: The person in charge of your educational program (e.g., the professor, instructor, administrator, instructional supervisor, cooperating/supervising/classroom teacher, or training supervisor who is guiding you in completing this module).

Student: The person who is receiving occupational instruction in a secondary, postsecondary, or other training program.

Vocational Service Area: A major vocational field: agricultural education, business and office education, marketing and distributive education, health occupations education, home economics education, industrial arts education, technical education, or trade and industrial education.

You or the Teacher/Instructor: The person who is completing the module.

Levels of Performance for Final Assessment

N/A: The criterion was not met because it was **not applicable** to the situation.

None: No attempt was made to meet the criterion, although it was relevant.

Poor: The teacher is unable to perform this skill or has only **very limited ability** to perform it.

Fair: The teacher is unable to perform this skill in an acceptable manner but has **some ability** to perform it.

Good: The teacher is able to perform this skill in an **effective** manner.

Excellent: The teacher is able to perform this skill in a **very effective** manner.

Titles of the National Center's Performance-Based Teacher Education Modules

Category A: Program Planning, Development, and Evaluation

A–1 Prepare for a Community Survey
A–2 Conduct a Community Survey
A–3 Report the Findings of a Community Survey
A–4 Organize an Occupational Advisory Committee
A–5 Maintain an Occupational Advisory Committee
A–6 Develop Program Goals and Objectives
A–7 Conduct an Occupational Analysis
A–8 Develop a Course of Study
A–9 Develop Long-Range Program Plans
A–10 Conduct a Student Follow-Up Study
A–11 Evaluate Your Vocational Program

Category B: Instructional Planning

B–1 Determine Needs and Interests of Students
B–2 Develop Student Performance Objectives
B–3 Develop a Unit of Instruction
B–4 Develop a Lesson Plan
B–5 Select Student Instructional Materials
B–6 Prepare Teacher-Made Instructional Materials

Category C: Instructional Execution

C–1 Direct Field Trips
C–2 Conduct Group Discussions, Panel Discussions, and Symposiums
C–3 Employ Brainstorming, Buzz Group, and Question Box Techniques
C–4 Direct Students in Instructing Other Students
C–5 Employ Simulation Techniques
C–6 Guide Student Study
C–7 Direct Student Laboratory Experience
C–8 Direct Students in Applying Problem-Solving Techniques
C–9 Employ the Project Method
C–10 Introduce a Lesson
C–11 Summarize a Lesson
C–12 Employ Oral Questioning Techniques
C–13 Employ Reinforcement Techniques
C–14 Provide Instruction for Slower and More Capable Learners
C–15 Present an Illustrated Talk
C–16 Demonstrate a Manipulative Skill
C–17 Demonstrate a Concept or Principle
C–18 Individualize Instruction
C–19 Employ the Team Teaching Approach
C–20 Use Subject Matter Experts to Present Information
C–21 Prepare Bulletin Boards and Exhibits
C–22 Present Information with Models, Real Objects, and Flannel Boards
C–23 Present Information with Overhead and Opaque Materials
C–24 Present Information with Filmstrips and Slides
C–25 Present Information with Films
C–26 Present Information with Audio Recordings
C–27 Present Information with Televised and Videotaped Materials
C–28 Employ Programmed Instruction
C–29 Present Information with the Chalkboard and Flip Chart
C–30 Provide for Students' Learning Styles

Category D: Instructional Evaluation

D–1 Establish Student Performance Criteria
D–2 Assess Student Performance: Knowledge
D–3 Assess Student Performance: Attitudes
D–4 Assess Student Performance: Skills
D–5 Determine Student Grades
D–6 Evaluate Your Instructional Effectiveness

Category E: Instructional Management

E–1 Project Instructional Resource Needs
E–2 Manage Your Budgeting and Reporting Responsibilities
E–3 Arrange for Improvement of Your Vocational Facilities
E–4 Maintain a Filing System
E–5 Provide for Student Safety
E–6 Provide for the First Aid Needs of Students
E–7 Assist Students in Developing Self-Discipline
E–8 Organize the Vocational Laboratory
E–9 Manage the Vocational Laboratory
E–10 Combat Problems of Student Chemical Use

Category F: Guidance

F–1 Gather Student Data Using Formal Data-Collection Techniques
F–2 Gather Student Data Through Personal Contacts
F–3 Use Conferences to Help Meet Student Needs
F–4 Provide Information on Educational and Career Opportunities
F–5 Assist Students in Applying for Employment or Further Education

Category G: School–Community Relations

G–1 Develop a School–Community Relations Plan for Your Vocational Program
G–2 Give Presentations to Promote Your Vocational Program
G–3 Develop Brochures to Promote Your Vocational Program
G–4 Prepare Displays to Promote Your Vocational Program
G–5 Prepare News Releases and Articles Concerning Your Vocational Program
G–6 Arrange for Television and Radio Presentations Concerning Your Vocational Program
G–7 Conduct an Open House
G–8 Work with Members of the Community
G–9 Work with State and Local Educators
G–10 Obtain Feedback about Your Vocational Program

Category H: Vocational Student Organization

H–1 Develop a Personal Philosophy Concerning Vocational Student Organizations
H–2 Establish a Vocational Student Organization
H–3 Prepare Vocational Student Organization Members for Leadership Roles
H–4 Assist Vocational Student Organization Members in Developing and Financing a Yearly Program of Activities
H–5 Supervise Activities of the Vocational Student Organization
H–6 Guide Participation in Vocational Student Organization Contests

Category I: Professional Role and Development

I–1 Keep Up to Date Professionally
I–2 Serve Your Teaching Profession
I–3 Develop an Active Personal Philosophy of Education
I–4 Serve the School and Community
I–5 Obtain a Suitable Teaching Position
I–6 Provide Laboratory Experiences for Prospective Teachers
I–7 Plan the Student Teaching Experience
I–8 Supervise Student Teachers

Category J: Coordination of Cooperative Education

J–1 Establish Guidelines for Your Cooperative Vocational Program
J–2 Manage the Attendance, Transfers, and Terminations of Co-Op Students
J–3 Enroll Students in Your Co-Op Program
J–4 Secure Training Stations for Your Co-Op Program
J–5 Place Co-Op Students on the Job
J–6 Develop the Training Ability of On-the-Job Instructors
J–7 Coordinate On-the-Job Instruction
J–8 Evaluate Co-Op Students' On-the-Job Performance
J–9 Prepare for Students' Related Instruction
J–10 Supervise an Employer–Employee Appreciation Event

Category K: Implementing Competency-Based Education (CBE)

K–1 Prepare Yourself for CBE
K–2 Organize the Content for a CBE Program
K–3 Organize Your Class and Lab to Install CBE
K–4 Provide Instructional Materials for CBE
K–5 Manage the Daily Routines of Your CBE Program
K–6 Guide Your Students Through the CBE Program

Category L: Serving Students with Special/Exceptional Needs

L–1 Prepare Yourself to Serve Exceptional Students
L–2 Identify and Diagnose Exceptional Students
L–3 Plan Instruction for Exceptional Students
L–4 Provide Appropriate Instructional Materials for Exceptional Students
L–5 Modify the Learning Environment for Exceptional Students
L–6 Promote Peer Acceptance of Exceptional Students
L–7 Use Instructional Techniques to Meet the Needs of Exceptional Students
L–8 Improve Your Communication Skills
L–9 Assess the Progress of Exceptional Students
L–10 Counsel Exceptional Students with Personal–Social Problems
L–11 Assist Exceptional Students in Developing Career Planning Skills
L–12 Prepare Exceptional Students for Employability
L–13 Promote Your Vocational Program with Exceptional Students

Category M: Assisting Students in Improving Their Basic Skills

M–1 Assist Students in Achieving Basic Reading Skills
M–2 Assist Students in Developing Technical Reading Skills
M–3 Assist Students in Improving Their Writing Skills
M–4 Assist Students in Improving Their Oral Communication Skills
M–5 Assist Students in Improving Their Math Skills
M–6 Assist Students in Improving Their Survival Skills

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Student Guide to Using Performance-Based Teacher Education Materials
Resource Person Guide to Using Performance-Based Teacher Education Materials
Guide to the Implementation of Performance-Based Teacher Education
Performance-Based Teacher Education: The State of the Art, General Education and Vocational Education

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